



Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the DSS Budget - 2/16/17

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PLEASE DO NOT SHRED THE SAFETY NET

Good evening honorable members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Carline Ferrer and I am Primary Case Manager for Safety Net program at Catholic Charities – Archdiocese of Hartford providing services to needy families in Waterbury and the surrounding communities. We work with clients who have exhausted their state benefits and are at risk of losing what little they have. We help families move from desperate times to self-sufficiency through targeted in-home case management, care coordination and support services. Through our work with families in their homes and communities, we empower them to identify barriers, develop a plan to overcome those barriers and reach their goals. Every day I see families who are empowered to succeed through the help of this important program.

When falling on hard times it is programs like Safety Net that protect low income families through their hardship. Safety Net is crucial to these families who need support when working towards stability so the children are safe. The workers empower the families to reach self-sufficiency while working on barriers to employment. The many families that have benefited from the Safety Net and have had success is maintaining safety and reaching stability and self-sufficiency. The Safety Net Program is dedicated to empowering families to succeed by identifying and reducing barriers to employment, increasing access to community resources, and minimizing risk to children. The program is committed to identifying family strengths and helping to empower families to use these strengths to succeed in employment, education and community building.

I urge you fully fund the Safety Net Services program, funded through the Safety Net and Community Services lines in the DSS budget. This is a core program to support families facing the many challenges of poverty so that they can remove obstacles to employment and become self-reliant. The Governor's budget eliminates these lines and consolidates funding from the Safety Net and Community Services lines to the Human Service Infrastructure line, which is then reduced in total by 20%.

Please save the Safety Net program and do not reduce its funding.